Plato's *Republic*

Book IV

Summary

- This book presents what Martha Nussbaum has called the **Formal (or Political) Theory of the Good** (see her book *The Fragility of Goodness*, p. 139), relying upon analogy:
- The four virtues of the **city** are identified (wisdom [*sophia*], courage [*andreia*], moderation [*sōphrosunē*], and justice [*dikaiosunē*]). The first two are associated with particular classes (guardians and auxiliaries, respectively), whereas the last two are associated with all three* classes.
- Then the analogy first suggested at 369a is completed (city and man): the three parts of the **soul** are identified (the calculating, spirited, and desiring parts), and the four virtues are shown to perform the same functions in the *soul* as they did in the *city*. (**Full Theory of the Good** not offered until Book IX; complete defense coming….)
- Plato then offers a *preliminary response* to the

The Four Virtues of the City

with the last one, justice, arrived at through a process of elimination (427d-434b)

1. ***Wisdom (sophia):*** "A kind of knowledge belonging to some of the citizens that counsels not about the affairs connected with some particular thing in the city, but about how *the city as a whole* would best deal with itself and the other cities" (428d). This virtue is peculiar to the *guardians*.
2. ***Courage (andreia):*** "This kind of power & preservation, through everything, of the right and lawful *opinion* about what is terrible and what not" (430b). This virtue peculiar to the guardians and the *auxiliaries* (413b, 434c, 440d-e). Unusual definition, but consistent with the Socratic "virtue is knowledge" doctrine. Nice metaphor offered: this virtue is like a dye that cannot be removed by the powerful lyes of pleasure, pain, fear, or desire

3. ***Moderation (sōphrosunē):*** "A kind of *harmony*," a "*unanimity*," "an *accord* of worse and better, according to nature, as to which must rule in the city and in each one" (432a-b). Musical analogy used; not limited to just one class, but "actually stretches throughout the whole, from top to bottom of the entire scale, making [all] *sing* the same chant together." Linked to idea of ***consensus***.
4. ***Justice (dikaiosunē):*** "Each one must practice *one* of the functions of the city, that one for which his nature made him naturally most fit.... the money-making, auxiliary, and guardian classes doing *what's appropriate*, each of them *minding its own business** in a city" (433a, 434d). Again, this is a quality of the whole city, not of a particular class. Strongly linked to the idea of ***natural hierarchy*** and a parallel ***division of labor***. *(vs. Athenian democracy)*

NOTE: ***3*** and ***4*** tough to distinguish – think of ***3*** as

The Three Parts of the Soul

analogous to the three classes in the city (435c-441c)

- *Is the soul unitary or multipart? If multipart, two parts or three?* Argument proceeds through a series of steps. An initial assumption: *principle of noncontradiction* ("It's plain that the same thing won't be willing at the same time to *do or suffer opposites* with respect to the same part and in relation to the same thing" [436c]. {me_t: $eye_t \rightarrow chair_t$})
- ***Step 1:*** Establish existence of two parts. *Example:* "men who are thirsty but not willing to drink." *Conclusion:* there are "calculating" and "desiring" parts. (439c-439e)
- ***Step 2:*** Establish that "spirited" part distinct from "desiring" part. *Example:* Leontius and the corpses (executed beside North Wall). *Conclusion:* spirited part and calculating part *can* be allies—but are they distinct? (439e-440e)
- ***Step 3:*** Establish that the "spirited" part is distinct

- The *three parts of the soul* (the calculating, spirited, and desiring parts) are analogous to the *three classes of the city* (guardian, auxiliary, and producer, respectively).
- Finally, here is the relationship among these three parts (thus completing the analogy), ***justice*** in the *individual:*

  "And these two [the calculating and spirited parts], thus trained and having truly learned their own business and been educated, will be *set over* the desiring—which is surely most of the soul in each and by nature most insatiable for money—and they'll watch it for fear of its being filled with the so-called pleasures of the body and thus becoming big and strong, and then *not minding its own business, but attempting to enslave* and rule what is not appropriately ruled by its class and subverting everyone's entire life."* (442b; cf.

The Four Virtues of the Soul

(with their corresponding vices)

1. ***Wisdom (lack of learning):*** "the knowledge of that which is beneficial for each part and for the whole composed of the community of these three parts." (442c-d)
2. ***Courage (cowardice):*** preservation, "through pains and pleasures, what has been proclaimed by the *speeches* about that which is terrible and that which is not." (442c)
3. ***Moderation (licentiousness):*** "when the ruling part and two ruled parts are of the *single opinion* that the calculating part ought to rule and don't raise faction against it." (442d)
4. ***Justice (injustice):*** "He doesn't let each part in him mind other people's business or the three classes in the soul meddle with each other, but really *sets his own house in good order and rules*

Preliminary Response to Glaucon & Adeimantus

- Challenge made three times (358c, 361c, 367c-d) in Book II.
- **Restated:** “It now remains for us to consider whether it is profitable to do just things, practice fine ones, and be just, [even if] one’s being such remains unnoticed; or whether it is profitable to do injustice and be unjust, provided one doesn’t pay the penalty….” (445a)
- **Response:** “If life does not seem livable with the *body’s* nature *corrupted*, not even with every sort of food and drink and every sort of wealth and every sort of rule, will it then be livable when the nature of that very thing by which we live [i.e., the *soul]* is confused and corrupted, even if a man does whatever else he might want except that which will rid him of vice and injustice and will enable him to acquire justice and virtue?” (445b)
- *Final* response not given until Book IX (587b). If you were going to read only *part* of the *Republic*, you

Trajectories

- A long detour commences at 449b (at the beginning of Book V) and continues until 543c (in Book VIII), where the theme at 445d (about five types of regimes and souls) is picked up once again.
- The proximate cause for this detour is Socrates' earlier claim that "friends have all things in common" (424a), which the assembled participants find scandalous, especially with respect to *wives*.